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NEWS AND NOTES

THE ASSOCIATIONS

WORK IN NEW YORK CITY

The New York City Association holds four meetings during the school year. The addresses at these meetings are of particular interest and value to English teachers. For instance, the speakers and subjects for 1920-21 have been, so far: Mr. C. H. Ward, Taft School, "Democracy and Themes"; Mr. Edwin Markham, "Poetry and Its Relation to Life," with readings from the speaker's poems; Professor John Erskine, Columbia University, "The Writing of Poetry."

But aside from these meetings the most vital work undertaken by the association is the investigating and planning done by various committees. The results of the work of these committees is printed from time to time in the form of bulletins. Besides being distributed to members, these bulletins are available to anyone interested for the bare cost of printing.

The latest bulletin, No. 24, which was the *Report of the Committee on Supplementary Reading Based on the Required Texts* was published at a cost of twenty cents.

At present the following committees are at work, and their findings may be expected to appear as the work is completed: Economy of Time, Why Pupils Fail in English, Visualization, Americanization, High School Publications.

MARY V. RIBLET, *Secretary*

BRYANT HIGH SCHOOL
LONG ISLAND CITY

THE IOWA ASSOCIATION

In connection with the annual meeting of the Iowa State Teachers' Association, the English Round Table met at West High School, Des Moines, November 5, 1920. The program included papers by Professor Percival Hunt of the State University, Professor Frank L. Mott of Simpson College, Miss Mildred E. Lambert of Grinnell College, and Miss Ida T. Jacobs of West High School, Des Moines. Each paper was followed by a general discussion. In addition to the program, there was

effected a reorganization of the Iowa Association of Teachers of English. This action was the result of a general feeling on the part of public-school and college teachers that there is need for a permanent organization of the English teachers of the state that can unify the aims of all and work with unity and method on the problems that need to be solved.

It was realized that some of the most valuable work of the association can be done in the meetings of the English round tables of the district teachers' associations, which meet in their various quarters of the state in March. In the first place, many teachers attend these programs who are unable to be present at the general meeting in the fall. Furthermore, an excellent opportunity for progressive action is seen in the fact that discussions begun in the section conferences can be carried forward or completed at the general meeting of the association a few months later.

Officers of the association were elected as follows: president, Ida T. Jacobs, West High School, Des Moines; vice-president, George R. Coffman, Grinnell College; secretary and treasurer, H. Y. Moffett, University of Iowa. Executive Committee: Professor Coffman; Louisa McCoy, High School, Algona; and Mary H. Wickware, Crocker Junior High School, Des Moines.

At present the association has a membership of over 150, and committees are at work upon plans which include the investigation of problems, the publication of bulletins, and co-operation with the Iowa Library Association and other educational bodies of the state.

One of the first necessary steps is the interpretation and completion of the provisional program of English study presented by the committee in 1919. It has been decided that the most pressing need is for the formulation of a scheme of minimum essentials in composition that will fit Iowa conditions. A preliminary statement of essentials for the eighth and ninth grades has been prepared and published in the *University of Iowa Extension Bulletin No. 68*. This work is to be continued during the present year, with reports and discussions at the spring meetings of the round tables. Five of these groups have their plans practically completed. These and their chairman are as follows: Northwestern Association, Sioux City, Lucy E. Hobbs, chairman, and Fort Dodge, Ada Buhlman, chairman; Northeastern Association, Waterloo, Alice Rogers, chairman; Central Association, Des Moines, Inez Hovey, chairman; Southeastern Association, Davenport, Esther L. Bissell, chairman.

H. Y. MOFFETT, *Secretary*

PUGET SOUND ENGLISH TEACHERS' COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

The annual meeting of the Puget Sound English Teachers' Council was held in Philosophy Hall at the University of Washington, Seattle, December 4, 1920. Reports were submitted by the committees organized in January, 1920, to work on problems of "English in Elementary Schools," "Composition in High Schools," and "Literature in High Schools."

The council voted to make the committees of the past year standing committees. Two additional committees have been authorized by the council: one on "Literature in High School Libraries" and one on "Junior College English." The new committees will report April 30, at the next meeting of the council.

The constitution was amended to make the annual dues of members one dollar and to make the term of officers and directors two years, the officers and the three directors to be elected in alternate years.

Officers and committees for 1921 are as follows: president, Frederick M. Padelford, University of Washington; vice-president, James Land Ellis, University of Washington; secretary and treasurer, Edna E. Bowman, High School, Everett; Directors: E. J. Klemme, Washington State Normal School, Bellingham; O. B. Sperlin, Stadium High School, Tacoma; Elsie English, Willard School, Tacoma. Committee chairman are as follows: English in Elementary Schools, Bertha Winifred Chesney, 3601 N. 7th Street, Tacoma; High-School Literature, Susannah J. McMurphy, Stadium High School, Tacoma; High-School Composition, H. D. Johnson, West Seattle High School; High-School Libraries, Mildred Pope, librarian of Seattle High Schools, Broadway High School; Junior-College English, Robert Max Garrett, University of Washington.

EDNA E. BOWMAN, *Secretary*

EVERETT HIGH SCHOOL

THE PERIODICALS

HIGH-SCHOOL GRAMMAR

The principal article in the *Bulletin* of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English for February, 1921, is called "Seven Points." It sets forth seven reasons for more definite and thorough teaching of grammar in our high schools and a very brief outline of the grammatical topics to be considered. The most important section of the article deals with the results of an examination in grammar given to the Freshman

students at the University of Wisconsin. The results in the ordinary Freshman classes and in the sub-Freshman English sections are compared. It seems that there is a very high correlation between ability to pass the grammar examination and ability to write acceptably. Of course, this brief investigation does not *prove* that the lack of grammatical knowledge is the cause, but there is such an implication. Moreover, it appears that the majority of these who have had less than four years of English in the high school have been remanded to the sub-Freshman sections, while something like two-thirds of those who have had four years of high-school English can do the Freshman work acceptably.

The same *Bulletin* contains also a "Minimum Course in Grammar for Secondary Schools," outlined by a committee of the Wisconsin Association.

LESSONS FROM THE FRENCH

Blanche Walker gives in the *English Leaflet* (New England Association) for February six lessons which American teachers of English may learn from the French teacher's teaching of French: (1) a unification of the work, which enables each teacher to know exactly what has been done by previous teachers and so to avoid both repetition and omission; (2) an early mastery of correctness so that elegance and accuracy may be cultivated later; (3) fewer recitations per week, so that the teacher has time to do the requisite amount of correction of written work; (4) by means of dictation in the early grades and later by a thorough preparation before writing, avoiding blundering expression; (5) definite and extended study of vocabulary; (6) teachers with more training and much longer experience. Miss Walker bases all her conclusions upon Professor Brown's *How the French Boy Learns to Write*.

A NEW LOCAL ORGAN

The new organ of the New York State Association is an accomplished fact. Its name is *The English Bulletin*, its editor, J. Stevens Kadesch, of the Albany High School; its business manager, James M. Spinning, West High School, Rochester, New York; and the subscription price, fifty cents for four issues.

The leading article in the first number is "The Dislike of Jordan," a summary by C. H. Ward of an address he gave before the association. The present illiteracy of high-school and college students he likens to the leprosy of Naaman and says it can be cured only by washing in the, as some think, muddy stream of rudiments. By implication rudiments

should be taught first. Particularly he decries teaching by the method of literary imitation as unfitted to the ability of our boys and girls. He closes with a plea for outlining definite courses of study in various localities and then building up a real technique of teaching.

The other long article in this *Bulletin* is on "The Project Method of Teaching Composition," by Elsa S. Payne, of Utica Free Academy. It describes that type of project work which consists of books of themes upon one topic written by each individual pupil. Even those who dislike to limit the project to such long and ambitious undertakings will find the article suggestive and stimulating.

A SUCCESSFUL APPROACH TO POETRY

A. Bess Clark contributes to *Education* for February "Another Observation from Problem English Teaching." She refers first to the problem work already reported by her in the *English Journal* and then takes up the specific problem of appreciation of poetry. The methods of which she had made use were, first, one semester devoted to poetry, in which the pupils worked backward from Douglas Malloch, Service, and Kipling, sometimes as far as Burns; second, continual attention to poetry in connection with prose and drama, also studied from the present backward; third, continual encouragement of poetic expression upon the subjects before the class. She insists that this encouragement of poetry-writing is one of the best means of securing poetry appreciation and at the same time is evidence of it.

INNER SPEECH AND SPEED

The *Catholic Educational Review* for February contains a report by John A. O'Brien of an experiment to decrease inner speech in silent reading. Pupils were told that inner speech was a hindrance to their speed in silent reading and then they were set to read for half an hour a day as rapidly as they could and at the same time comprehend. The result of this attempt to minimize or eliminate inner speech and to increase speed was that pupils who at first could read but 175 words per minute could, at the end of six weeks, read approximately 520 words per minute.

DOES OUTLINING PAY?

A report of an experiment to determine whether time devoted to making a corrected summary of an article or time devoted to re-reading the same article is most fruitful in a grasp of what is read appears in the *Elementary School Journal* for February. C. E. Germane, the experimenter, finds that there is a decided advantage in the re-reading. This

is true in all the grades from the fifth through the ninth. He admits the possibility that the failure of the corrected summary method was due to the inexperience of the children in making notes. On the other hand, it might be that the groups which re-read were unconsciously thinking of the article as a whole and summarizing it in their minds. A rather startling by-product is the information that grade 5 did one-fifth only of what it might have done, and grade 9 one-third.

THE VALUE OF WORD STUDY

V. A. C. Henmon has attempted to measure the value of word study and has published his results in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* for February. The experiment was carried on in a high-school Sophomore class for approximately twelve weeks, the usual method of parallel groups being used. Three vocabulary tests, Trabue's Completion Scale, and Thorndike's tests to measure the ability to read difficult prose understandingly were given at the conclusion of the study to both the experimental group and the control group. In every case the experimental group showed a small but clearly marked advantage over the control group. The only question, then, as to the desirability of using such a course in word study is whether more might be accomplished by some other means.

A LABORATORY METHOD

Visual Education for February contains an account of "The Photographic Method for Studying Reading," by A. R. Gilliland. It is impossible to reproduce this rather technical article in detail, but the graphs make it easy for anyone who is interested in this process to see exactly how it is carried out. Normal schools and schools of education particularly will desire to have the article made available to their students.

WHAT CONSTITUTES ABILITY IN SILENT READING

It is beginning to be recognized that the making of scientific measurements has a natural limit. In order to construct a standard test you must first know exactly what it is you are trying to test. Unfortunately, we know at present altogether too little about the abilities involved in the school subjects, and hence all the tests so far produced must be regarded as only rough approximations. All of this is set forth clearly in an article by Mr. and Mrs. Pressey in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* for January, 1921. The writers report the results of a careful examination of the Monroe Reading Scales and the Illinois Examination. They conclude that these tests are not measures of reading

ability in general, but merely ability to read the particular kind of subject-matter included in the tests. They propose four factors as the essential elements of the concept of silent reading: freedom from oral reading habits, a reading vocabulary, a background of information, interest and habits of attention and application. Such tests as the Kansas Test and Monroe Test are really tests of attention. They therefore have the wrong label.

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

Minstrelsy, Music, and the Dance in the English and Scottish Popular Ballads, a paper by L. C. Wimberly, is No. 4 of the University of Nebraska "Studies in Language, Literature, and Criticism." No. 5 of the same series is *Bergson's Theory of the Comic in the Light of English Comedy*, by Louise Mathewson.—*Bulletin No. 1* of the College Conference on English in the Central Atlantic States is devoted to "The Bible and the Classics as a Literary Background."—The report of the Committee on High-School Composition appointed by the Alabama Association of Teachers of English may be obtained from the president, Mrs. Jessie Dean Smith, The Mallard, Gadsden, Alabama.—The *Library Journal* for February 1 contains a list of volumes of poetry by individual authors and of collections of poetry issued during the last year. A collection of such lists from 1914 through 1919 is published by the Syracuse Public Library under the title *Eighty-seven Poets*.—*Library Leaflet No. 13* of the Bureau of Education is a "List of References on the Use of Pictures in Education."—The February *Book Bulletin* of the Chicago Public Library recognizes the ending of the war by including a list of new German books.—The *University of North Carolina Record, Extension Series No. 38*, contains a series of articles on "The Construction of Schoolhouses."—"The Unit Course in Poultry Husbandry" is the title of *Bulletin No. 63* of the Federal Board for Vocational Education.—The following are recent publications of the Bureau of Education: *Secondary School Circular No. 7*, "The Problem of Summer Teaching in Connection with Project Supervision"; *Industrial Education Circular No. 6*, "Examples of Good Teaching in Industrial Education"; *Bureau of Education Bulletin No. 87*, 1919, "Statistics of State Universities and Colleges for 1918 and 1919"; *Bulletin No. 42*, 1920, "Education for Highway Engineering and Highway Transport"; *Bulletin No. 46*, 1920, "Organization of State Departments of Education."